2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Labour Relations in the Colony

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ONE of the problems with which I had to deal and the one which I, personally, found the most difficult and more of a strain than all the bickerings and scufflings in the Protectorate and the continual worry of strained relations with the Yemen, was labour relations in the Colony. To understand the problem a very brief sketch is essential of the history of labour from the time that we first arrived in Aden until the immediate post-war period.

175 563 464 167 The invaders of Aden in 1839 came from India and brought with them Indian clerks and a few Indian artisans, and they not unnaturally looked to India for their future supply of skilled and semi-skilled labour. The local Arab was, by Indian standards, totally uneducated and seemed unlikely to take kindly to education, even if it was worth while for some effort to be made in that direction. The local article being thought unworthy of serious consideration, the practice of importing artisans and clerks from India to meet the ever-expanding demand for such workers, became the normal method of recruitment. Gradually a tradition was built up that the Arab would never be capable of skilled work and that such work was an Indian prerogative. The Indians themselves, short-sightedly, did nothing to discourage the belief.

563 464 178 This dangerous state of affairs persisted until after the World War, partly because the Arabs remained uneducated and partly because the Indians were good workmen and their European masters did not wish for any change. Then the education of the Arabs was taken in hand seriously and they responded in a way which surprised even their most fervent champions. They

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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soon showed that they could be educated, that they were capable of doing more than just manual labour and that with understanding and encouragement there was very little that was beyond their capabilities. They began to resent the presence in their midst of an army of Indian clerks and artisans doing work which, not always with justification at that time, they considered they were capable of doing and which should be theirs by right. Unfortunately, this resentment was not confined to the Indian workers, but was directed as well against their European employers which did not make for happy racial or labour relations in the future.

The general condition of Arab labour in the Colony when I first came to know Aden in the nineteen-thirties can only be described as disgraceful. There were no superannuation benefits, and as wages left no margin between income and expenditure, nothing could be saved against old age and sickness. There were no holidays with pay, and most workers had to find their own living accommodation, and the vast majority received no medical treatment or benefit through their employers. Labour relations, as we now understand that term, did not exist. There was no form of consultation between master and man and the authority of the master was absolute.

Coal and cargo coolies were provided with accommodation; they were housed in long sheds, owned by the coaling and stevedoring companies, in grossly overcrowded conditions without any washing or sanitary arrangements, the nearby beach just across the main road served as a combined bath and lavatory. The owners never had the smallest idea who lived in these dormitories and what went on there after dark, which was probably just as well for their peace of mind in this town where women were closely guarded and youth was uncontrolled.

By the end of the World War no very great improvement in conditions was noticeable and the housing shortage, already acute, was rendered more so by a Town Planning Scheme which virtually paralysed all building operations for two years, and achieved little else except an impracticable scheme which was brought into force in a modified form and then,

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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mercifully, abandoned. The post-war increase in Aden's trade brought more and more skilled and unskilled workers into the Colony, until the unsatisfactory overcrowding, at one time confined to the poorer elements of the population, had spread to white collared workers and highly skilled labour. Key money was illegal but no heed was paid to the law and very few houses changed tenants without it being given and taken in some form or other.

When I came to the Port Trust I set myself to improving the standard of living of the employees and modernising their terms of employment. Government also was striving to improve labour conditions, and in the nineteen-forties a minimum wage ordinance for unskilled daily paid workers passed the Legislative Council and became law. The problems of overtime rates, juvenile employment and maximum hours of work and many kindred subjects were studied and ordinances were drafted to provide very necessary legislation. At the same time a Housing Committee was set up under the Director of Public Works to tackle the housing shortage problem. Meanwhile we in the Port Trust decasualised as much of our labour as we could and Government followed suit with theirs, an example to business houses which they were in no hurry to follow. I introduced a families' medical scheme with a lady doctor in charge for Port Trust employees, which was immediately successful and which I have no doubt Government would have liked to have seen become Colony-wide; but it was not to be, there were too many difficulties. Some of the more enterprising commercial houses introduced superannuation schemes and medical benefit for their employees, and by 1954 annual leave on full pay had become the rule rather than the exception. It is extraordinary how quickly a lead is followed, and in a few short years after the war progress was made which in many countries has taken a life-time. The speed with which these concessions were granted upset the equilibrium of some workers who, anxious to make hay while the sun shone, began to demand more and more, well beyond their just entitlement, but on the whole labour behaved surprisingly well and there was only one serious industrial disagreement during this

period. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's bunkering and installation workers went on strike without serious consequences to anyone. Our really bad labour trouble was to come later.

Government set up a Labour and Welfare Department, and labour ordinances which had lain unenforced for years were brought into reality, much to the disgust of some factory owners whose premises were a danger to their employees and a disgrace to the Colony. So the progress went on, first one problem was tackled and then another, but I believe the working people derived most benefit from the housing schemes which were introduced. The Port Trust led the way in this field with a bold scheme to house the majority of their permanent labour force. I was glad to have been able to initiate that scheme, and I was even better pleased before I left Aden in 1956 to see completed the Government housing scheme at Ma'alla where 1,500 flats had been erected on a very modern housing estate planned primarily for Government employees. Even housing, like the measles, is catching and the major commercial undertakings followed the lead given them and it became usual rather than unusual for most permanent employees to be housed by their employers.

While all this building was going on in Tawahi and Crater, the outskirts of the Colony were not forgotten and Government erected over 1,000 houses at Sheikh Othman to relieve overcrowding.

This is not meant to be just a list of the achievements of Government and employers in the labour field, but an indication of the all-round efforts which were made in a comparatively short space of time to improve the working conditions and the housing of the workers in the Colony, especially those who were the least well provided for financially. All this activity, beneficial though it was, failed in one vital respect. Only in a few exceptional cases was there any real improvement in master and man relations. The employers remained out of touch with their men just when the closest co-operation and understanding was essential. They took little interest in their employees as individuals either inside the

factory or office or in their homes, and there was a sad lack of mutual respect, understanding and consultation. Negotiating machinery in industry, as we understand it in this country, did not exist and efforts made during the first years of my term of office as Governor to persuade Managements to modernise their outlook were largely unavailing. The employers had no federation or co-ordinating authority for their labour relations and labour was leaderless. Up to 1952 there was only one Trade Union in the Colony. Then suddenly Trades Union became fashionable and everyone wanted to have these new toys, with the result that by March 1956 some twenty-five Unions had been registered, the majority of whom had been in existence for only a few months. The Trades Union leaders were mostly young men and were, without exception, inexperienced and in some cases more interested in power than they were in the proper functioning of the Unions. The Unions were mostly House Unions and in their dealings with Managements their leaders often behaved in an ill-mannered and provocative manner and conducted themselves generally like people with an inferiority complex rather out of their depth, which is precisely what they were. One thing the Union leaders had no doubt about was that they would not hesitate to make full use of their new authority. They had not long to wait. At this time strikes were very much in the air literally, with news of labour unrest a feature of practically every radio news broadcast, blared forth in the Colony eating houses and coffee shops. The atmosphere was certainly conducive to strikes, and I am afraid that many of the Trades Union leaders did not view the possibility of their advent with that concern, and indeed dismay, which they would have had they been more experienced and responsible. They had all got their toys and maybe some of the children wanted to wind them up and see what would happen.

The employers, on the other hand, were inexperienced in dealing with Trades Union and resented, often with cause, the attitude of the Trades Union officials. With the exception of the "Shipping Conference" which was composed of representatives of the shipping companies and was mainly concerned

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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with freight rates and stevedoring charges, the employers were disorganised and were, for the most part, in active competition with each other. They were very conscious of the considerable improvements in living and working conditions which had been made by them and they felt that they were entitled to expect, if not the gratitude of their workmen, at least a period of industrial calm free from further demands. They were alarmed at the increase in the number of the Trades Union, which meant only one thing to them and that was more and more and bigger and bigger demands by labour until commercial life became impossible. It seemed quite clear to the majority of the employers that the Unions would have to be fought and brought to their senses or broken, and that this must be done before they became too strong.

Although the continued anti-British broadcasts from Cairo had undoubtedly had their effect on the general atmosphere in the Colony, which the activities of the nationalist National United Front Party had done nothing to improve, labour as a whole was behaving reasonably well. There were, of course, some differences of opinion between individuals and Managements, but the two main labour problems were being dealt with. The first of these problems, which was not in any way extraordinary and concerned shift rates for stevedores, was under discussion between employers and the Labour Department of Government, and a satisfactory settlement was in sight. The second problem was out of the ordinary and was a direct result of the improved housing conditions which many workmen now enjoyed. Put simply the trouble was that the provision of better and modern housing had increased the cost of living of the occupants to a point where, on their wage scales, they could not make both ends meet and were distinctly worse off financially than they had been before the new houses and flats were available. The reason for this curious state of affairs was not increased rent, because although there had been an increase it had been cushioned by subsidisation by Government, the Refinery, the Port Trust and the commercial houses which provided housing for their employees. Previously many of the workmen concerned had been living three or four families

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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511 together in one room, or verandah, or in a scrap-wood and corrugated iron hut on the hillside. They had no washing facilities and used public latrines, and when the kerosene oil in the lamp was exhausted they went to sleep. The new accommodation had running water laid on, a bathroom and water-borne sanitation and electric light. This was as it should be, but this was where the trouble arose because water and electricity in Aden had both to be paid for, and investigation showed that the provision of these necessities increased the workman's monthly expenditure by fifteen per cent. There was also some social rivalry among the families and trying to live up to the Joneses never does reduce expenditure.

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871 Yet another cause of increased expenditure, which was universal and did not apply specifically to the dwellers in the new houses and flats, was that more children were going to school.

In 1921 there were 359 boys in Government schools, by 1948 this had increased to 4,000 boys and girls, and by 1956 no less than 10,000 children were attending Government schools and many more were going to other educational establishments. Primary and Intermediate education were free and even at Aden College and the Technical Institute the boys of poor parents were able to continue their education with Government scholarships, so the trouble was not with school fees. The parents' financial burden was added to because the boys and the girls had to be decently dressed in clean clothes to go to school, instead of wearing any old thing to hang about the town in or run errands.

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(465) The Aden Government and the Refinery Management were alive to the difficulties of their employees and we and they were taking steps to solve the problem by a revision of some of the wage scales to relieve the financial pressure on the less well paid men. If our plans could have been completed before an unfortunate dispute between a Management and Trades Union officials lighted the fuse to set off a chain of strikes, which were exploited by the National United Front for their own ends, it is probable that the trouble when it came, and come it probably would have done in the atmosphere then prevailing in the Colony, would have been quite limited

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1953 MM1 Aden MM1

in its extent and the Refinery would not have been directly involved. As it was there was general confusion, with neither side acting rationally. Labour relations, never good, became chaotic with the employers determined to fight anything in the nature of a demand, however reasonable it might be; and many of the Union leaders were equally determined to have a strike, unjustified though it might be. Members of some Unions were brought out on strike before any demands had been put forward by the leaders to the Managements concerned and without any clear idea of why they were striking.

The only measure of agreement there was between the two parties was their condemnation of the conduct of my Government. One side, I leave you to guess which, said that the whole trouble was Communist inspired, or if not actually Communist then the work of the Nationalists which was much the same thing, and anyway the strikes were purely political in cause and conduct, and were not in any way industrial. In their view Government were dreadfully weak and lamentably biased and were doing nothing when they should have been deporting the rascally political leaders disguised as Trades Union officials. They had a great deal more to say, but it all amounted to one thing, that Government was gravely at fault. The opposite party was just as outspoken and did not hesitate to describe Government officials as harsh and the police as overbearing and tyrannical and, in fact, murderers. In their view the workmen were grossly oppressed and there was a distressing lack of sympathy for the downtrodden and so on and so forth. They considered that Government should force the employers to grant every single Union demand, reasonable or unreasonable, simply because it was a Trades Union demand.

In fact, of course, we did everything we could to prevent the strikes and to stop them spreading when once they started. The Labour Commissioner worked day and night to bring the parties together and try and solve their difficulties which were, whatever anyone may say, fundamentally industrial in origin. I, myself, met both sides time and time again, but to no avail. They were beyond rational thought.

At the same time the first essential was to maintain law and

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

579 order in the Colony, and this was done with the minimum
689 of force by the police supported by the military forces in the Colony. The fact that on two occasions the police were forced to open fire on rioters indicates how serious the situation was. It also indicates our determination to let nothing hinder us in the execution of our duty. Mercifully there were only two or three casualties, one of whom was a schoolboy who was killed by a stray shot while watching a crowd being prevented from storming the Tawahi Police Station in order to release a workman who, very properly, had been arrested. It was a tragic business. Some innocent person almost inevitably suffers on these occasions. I was, by chance, in Tawahi when the boy's funeral procession passed along the road and after it had gone by an elderly man, an Arab, walked up to me and said:

"You are responsible. It was murder."

Emotion had distorted his judgment, poor fellow, and I mention the incident only to indicate the unreasonableness that prevailed.

468 The Refinery Management kept their heads and showed good sense, as did some of the leading members of the Aden Trades Union Congress, several of whom worked indefatiguably to end the strikes. Without their help and understanding things would have been very much worse. As it was, normal conditions at the Refinery were restored in a comparatively short space of time, and then the pieces all fell into place again and the strikes were over, except in one or two cases where one side or the other was particularly stupid and unyielding.

625 In my opinion it was the Civil and Military security forces who came best out of this sorry affair. They were firm at the right time and lenient at the right time and their patience was admirable at all times. It was due to them that the situation did not become very much worse. It is only right that I should say so and that they should receive a few halfpence when they deserve them—they get enough kicks when they don't.

468 I ordered a Commission to be set up to inquire into the
• 466 cause of the strikes and to make recommendations for the

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

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future. The Commission was composed of the Attorney-General who presided, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, a European both knowledgeable and far-sighted, two influential Arab members of the Legislative Council, a Trade Union official from the only Union that did not take any part in the strikes, and Mr. James Young, the well-known British Trade Unionist, who was selected by the Trades Union Congress in London in response to a request from us, and who flew out to Aden. Aden owes a considerable debt of gratitude to Mr. Young. The verdict of the Commission was that the strikes were basically industrial in origin but that one political party had done their utmost to exploit them for their own purposes.

The young Trades Union must learn to keep politics in their proper place which, in my view, should be outside the Union, and at the same time to be more responsible in their words and deeds. The employers must be more patient and more adaptable to the changing world about them. Patience, sympathy and common sense is the right mixture for both sides and should be prescribed in large doses. If it is taken regularly there will not be any serious labour trouble in Aden.

3:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1938) 1940 MM1 Aden MM1

VIII.—LABOUR

Agricultural Labour

241 There being no agriculture in the Colony, the question of agricultural labour does not arise.

Industrial Labour

464 Workers for heavy manual labour are obtained from the Protec-
466 torate and the Yemen. This form of labour is principally confined to the shipping companies and the salt works. The demand for cargo and coal coolies varies, and the local companies arrange through their agents to recruit labour as and when required. The salt companies employ a permanent staff of coolies who are recruited by local agents from the Protectorate and the Yemen. These agents arrange to replace casualties and recruit extra labour when necessary.

466 The interests of the workmen are safeguarded by the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923, and the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, which are in force in the Colony.

IX.—WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

463 The inhabitants of Aden are principally engaged in trading, shop-keeping and domestic employment. The large numbers of coolies employed by the salt-works, shipping concerns and contractors are drawn from the Aden Protectorate or the Yemen. The small harbour craft are manned by Somalis, who take kindly to this form of semi-sedentary employment.

464 More than half of the personal servant class comes from the Aden Protectorate and the Yemen. Clerical labour in public offices and large commercial firms is largely Indian, although as education improves more local Arabs are finding employment in Government offices and with European firms. Local Arab firms employ Arab clerical labour almost exclusively.

Masons and building operatives are drawn principally from the
465 Yemen. The following rates of wages are paid.

Coolies from 8 to 12 annas a day (8 hours).
Masons from 1 to 3 rupees a day (8 hours).
Carpenters from 1 to 3 rupees a day (8 hours).
Clerks from Rs. 35 to Rs. 250 a month (according to grade).
Personal servant Rs. 15 to Rs. 50 a month.
Motor drivers Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 a month.

262 The daily staple food of a coolie is 2 lb. flour, 2 ounces of ghee,
435 and also fish or meat to the cost of about 2 annas. The total value
465 of the food consumed daily is about 6 annas.
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4:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1937) 1939 MM1 Aden MM1

The following table shows the value of the most important articles of the export trade for the last five years:— 439

Articles.	*1933–34.*	*1934–35.*	*1935–36.*	*1936–37.*	*1937.*
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Piece goods, grey	50,91,091	36,66,609	50,62,407	40,02,310	40,99,727
Piece goods, white	5,78,526	5,19,395	7,55,098	9,99,452	9,76,935
Piece goods, coloured.	29,83,297	28,28,147	31,77,184	40,86,579	38,87,306
Coffee	31,34,717	28,58,217	39,11,003	28,12,927	21,26,392
Skins, raw ...	56,95,317	39,18,447	53,57,094	71,94,785	80,94,619
Hides, raw ...	53,752	82,526	1,27,990	3,25,928	4,75,556
Grain and pulse	27,61,882	16,03,581	24,82,494	27,98,300	36,12,030
Tobacco ...	12,92,646	13,78,639	13,56,710	18,30,367	14,38,868
Provisions and oilman's stores.	5,35,699	5,67,504	6,61,462	5,55,675	6,60,563
Sugar	10,87,305	12,06,576	15,02,102	14,57,450	12,20,192
Gums and resins	6,31,467	6,08,409	7,66,767	5,83,822	8,42,817
Salt	29,83,410	27,89,402	36,13,997	30,96,141	33,69,418
Cotton twist ...	10,33,532	6,95,806	8,89,717	4,27,177	4,66,793
Spices	4,22,202	4,57,992	7,19,220	8,22,421	8,95,923
Oils	2,18,332	2,66,069	5,42,149	8,90,763	6,56,495
Metals	1,75,122	1,75,551	2,32,203	2,40,826	3,62,868
Animals, living	1,46,590	82,933	1,19,831	40,215	10,153
Tea	1,28,488	1,53,255	3,10,864	3,33,660	5,51,726
Dyeing materials	3,02,764	1,64,348	2,25,600	2,87,660	4,23,717
Soap	1,07,675	1,10,503	1,87,092	2,71,081	3,15,667
Shells	64,967	72,644	1,22,996	1,19,811	1,26,049

VIII.—LABOUR.

Agricultural Labour.

There being no agriculture in the Colony, the question of agricultural labour does not arise. 241 463

Industrial Labour.

Workers for heavy manual labour are obtained from the Protectorate and the Yemen. This form of labour is principally confined to the shipping companies and the salt-works. The demand for cargo and coal coolies varies, and the local companies arrange through their agents to recruit labour as and when required. The salt companies employ a permanent staff of coolies who are recruited by local agents from the Protectorate and the Yemen. These agents arrange to replace casualties and recruit extra labour when necessary. 464

The interests of the workmen are safeguarded by the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 and the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, which are applicable in the Colony. 466

4:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1937) 1939 MM1 Aden MM1

XIV.—LEGISLATION.

671 Twenty-five Ordinances were enacted between the inception of the Colony on the 1st April, 1937, and the close of the year. The most important of these were the following:—

General Clauses Acts (Adaptation). This Ordinance provided the necessary new terminology, etc., for carrying on the Indian and Bombay Acts in force before the birth of the Colony.

Interpretation and General Clauses. On the usual Colonial model.

Criminal Courts Ordinance, modelled on the Indian Criminal Procedure Code, with provision for jury trials in the Supreme Court, with appeals to the High Court of Bombay under the Aden Colony Order, 1936.

Income Tax, following closely the repealed Indian Income Tax Acts.

Civil Courts Ordinance, adapting, with little change, the Indian Code of Civil Procedure for the continuance of the Supreme Court, Registrar's and Small Causes Courts.

Stamp Ordinance, following closely the Indian Stamp Act.

Limitation, following the Indian Limitation Act.

Court Fees, continuing the former fees as varied under Bombay.

Guardians and Wards, following the Indian Guardian and Wards Act, but with larger discretion to the Judge in the interests of the minor.

Pensions, on the usual Colonial Model.

Police, adapting the Bombay Police Law.

Prisons, closely following the repealed Indian Acts.

Excise, a short and simple adaptation of the Bombay Abkari Act. Aden being a free port, liquor is one of the few excisable articles.

Dangerous Drugs and Poisons, a short law in Colonial form superseding the Indian Acts and Opium Act.

Subsidiary Legislation during 1937.

Civil Courts Rules, containing the less important provisions of the Indian Civil Procedure Code.

Excise Rules, replacing all the rules under the repealed Bombay Akbari Act.

Dangerous Drugs and Poisons Rules, replacing the Dangerous Drugs, Poisons and Bombay Opium Rules.

466 The Indian Workmen's Compensation and Factories Acts are still in force in the Colony.

657 There is no legislative provision for health insurance, old age pensions, etc., in the Colony.

XV.—BANKING, CURRENCY, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Banking.

453 The National Bank of India Limited is established in the Colony with its chief office in the Crater and a branch at Steamer Point. The commercial firm of Messrs. Cowasjee Dinshaw and Brothers also carries on the business of banking.

5:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1947) 1949 MM1 Aden MM1

Utilities and Petrol

435 Electric light, 5 as. per unit.
W[illegible] per 100 gallons.
P[illegible] 0.0 per gallon.

[illegible] high and accommodation scarce. Board in an inferior ho[illegible] about Rs. 10 per day.

466 In the absence of a specialised Labour Department, the District [467 Commissioner investigates such complaints as are brought to his notice. 468] There are no trade unions. Three strikes were reported and in each case settled by raising the wages of the employees to bring them into closer relation with the rising cost of living.

The following is the more important labour legislation in force in the Colony in December, 1947.

Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance (*No.* 20 *of* 1938)

This prohibits the employment of children under 15 years of age, and the employment of women or young persons between 15 and 18 years of age on night work or in specified occupations.

Factories Ordinance (*No.* 21 *of* 1938)

This provides for the health and safety of persons working in factories, their hours, holidays and overtime pay, and provides for the appointment of factory inspectors.

Workmen's Compensation Ordinance (*No.* 40 *of* 1939)

This provides for the free medical treatment of workmen and their compensation in the event of injury causing loss of employment or death.

Minimum Wage and Wages Regulation Ordinance (*No.* 17 *of* 1940)

This provides for fixing the minimum wages to be paid in any occupation.

Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinance (*No.* 23 *of* 1942)

This legalises trade unions and makes provision for their registration and the audit of their accounts. The English law as regards "intimidation" is followed.

Contracts of Employment (*Indigenous Workers*) *Ordinance* (*No.* 45 *of* 1942)

This provides for the employment of natives of Asia or Africa and requires contracts of employment for periods over six months to be in writing and approved by an authorised officer. It provides for the repatriation of employees working in other territories.

Labour Ordinance (*No.* 6 *of* 1943)

This regulates contracts of employment, requires contracts in writing to be approved by the District Commissioner, and makes provision for deeds of apprenticeship.

There is no old age pension scheme in Aden, but small grants from a Poor Relief Fund are made to the aged destitute.

6:Gt. Brit. Colonial Office G-3 (1948) 1950 MM1 Aden MM1

Food

Butter, Rs. 2.4.0 per lb.
Cheese, Rs. 1.1.0 per 12-oz. tin.
Fish, about 1 anna for a fish of the herring type and size, or less for coarser fish.
Flour, 5 as. per lb.
Ghee, Rs. 2 to Rs. 2.8.0 per lb.
Meat, 10 as. to 12 as. per lb.
Potatoes, 4 as. per lb.
Rice, 7 as. per lb.
Soap (Key Pale), 6 as. per 250-gram cake.
Sugar, brown, 5 as. per lb.
white, 6 as. per lb.
Tea, Rs. 1.14.0 per lb.

Clothing

Sheeting, coloured, Rs. 1 to Rs. 2 per yard.
Shirt, Rs. 5.
Shirting, white, Rs. 1.8.0 to Rs. 1.12.0 per yard.
Tropical suit, Rs. 60 and upwards.

Utilities and Petrol

Electric light, 5 as. per unit.
Water, 4 as. per 100 gallons.
Petrol, Rs. 1.6.0 per gallon.

Rents are high and accommodation scarce.

There is no separate Labour Department and efforts to secure a Welfare and Labour Officer during the year were not successful. The District Commissioner acts as Labour Officer and investigates such complaints as are brought to his notice.

No labour legislation was passed during the year. The following are the more important Ordinances in force:

Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance (*No.* 20 *of* 1938)

This prohibits the employment of children under 15 years of age, and the employment of women or young persons between 15 and 18 years of age on nightwork or in specified occupations.

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Minimum Wage and Wages Regulation Ordinance (*No.* 17 *of* 1940)

This provides for fixing the minimum wages to be paid in any occupation.

7: Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1949-50) 1951 MM1 Aden MM1

The cleaning, sorting and packing for re-export of hides, skins, coffee, incense and gum are occupations of considerable importance. Several big merchants as well as small exporters are engaged in these trades. No figures are available, but it is estimated that approximately 2,000 men and women are engaged as casual labour. Apart from some limited employment in domestic service, this is the only work in which women are employed in Aden.

There is no agriculture in the Colony, and the only local product is salt obtained from the sea by solar evaporation. This industry employs some 750 regular and 550 casual workers.

There is no heavy industry in Aden apart from some ship repairing (including floating docks). The light industries are confined to finishing processes using imported materials. The most important of these light industries are the production of aluminium, hollow-ware, soap, calico printing, and a little dyeing and weaving of cotton fabric, the manufacture of furniture and cigarettes. Machinery is used in the aluminium and cigarette factories, and to some extent in furniture making. The textile trade is primitive in the extreme and is entirely hand work. The weaving is done in the home, using primitive looms with hand-thrown shuttles.

Large numbers are engaged in retail trade, the distributive, catering and transport industries, and in small workshops or in independent crafts. Figures more recent than those of the 1946 census are not available. An unusually high proportion of persons are engaged in catering, particularly in small eating houses, coffee shops and in hawking food, tea, coffee and even iced drinking water. This is explained by the large number of immigrant male workers (whose families remain at home) and by the local custom of sending out for cooked food. There are also many domestic servants, particularly small boys employed in homes where purdah prevents the women from marketing.

There is a great deal of casual employment, comparatively few workers have permanent work, unskilled labour is entirely immigrant and dependent to a certain extent on economic conditions in nearby territories. Immigrant workers, whose families remain in their villages, usually return there after about two years.

Standards of craftsmanship are low, and the rate of production, quality of tools, and methods of work in general leave much to be desired. Mechanisation is almost unknown and a large labour force is thus employed in such processes as bunkering of coal by hand, and working salt in the pans, as well as, for example, in the building trade where even the wheelbarrow is rarely seen. Commercial firms and the very large number of small locally-owned workshops do not use any proper apprenticeship system. Boys pick up some knowledge as helpers, but are casually employed and may frequently change employment. A general all-round improvement is expected with the opening of the Government Technical College, where night classes for adults

7: Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1949-50) 1951 MM1 Aden mm1

874 will soon be available as well as the full-time course for younger students.

465 Wages remained stable throughout 1950, but towards the end of the year some increases were reported by employers in the building trade. The legal minimum wages remain as fixed by Regulation in April, 1949. There are probably some employers who still pay less than the required [H 35] minimum to unskilled labourers, usually immigrants from the Yemen. A comparative table of prices of a few commodities (*see* p. 11) indicate a fairly general rise in prices, and it is to be expected that in the near future there may be a general demand for increased wages.

466 468 Efforts have been made throughout the year to create better industrial relations by personal contact, visits and inspections of all places of work, and by some talks, posters, and leaflets. There are no trade unions in the Colony, and the workpeople have no conception of organisation or collective bargaining. Trade stoppages reported during 1950 numbered five, and about 2,000 working days were lost. The disputes were in all cases of a purely local nature involving one concern and its employees. All were ended by agreement and conciliation. In no cases was the Trade Disputes Ordinance invoked.

466 The only labour legislation introduced was an amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance requiring compulsory notice of certain non-fatal accidents. This became law on 31st December, 1950, and the effect cannot yet be judged. The Labour Officer, the Principal of the Government Technical College and the District Commissioner are Factory Inspectors for the Colony. During the year, 102 inspections were made of factories registered under the requirements of the Ordinance. The main objects of these visits were to educate employers and works managers in the requirements of the Ordinance, and to suggest the use of guards for the more dangerous machinery. An attempt to organise first-aid classes for foreman and workers had to be abandoned owing to complete lack of support.

745 There are no Government schemes either contributory or otherwise for sick pay, unemployment relief, or old age pensions for the ordinary worker. Apart from the provisions made by Government and the Aden Port Trust for its employees, only four commercial concerns are known to have contributory schemes for employee gratuities. Scarcely half of the employees who could benefit from these schemes have so far become contributors. A number of the larger and old established firms provide some medical services, and at their discretion give gratuities to long service employees.

647 Towards the end of 1950 the Labour Advisory Board was freshly constituted. In the absence of any workers' organisations, special effort was made to nominate some non-employers on the Board. This Board should be a most useful body which will continuously have under examination all labour problems in the Colony.

7: Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1949-50) 1951 MM1 Aden mm1

463

Factory Workers

Permanent and semi-casual :

Managers and supervisors	83
Clerks	60
Artisans	824
Labourers and unskilled	1,051
Boys	322
Casual labour (approximate)	950
TOTAL ..	3,290

Employment Abroad

Contracts attested for Aramco (Saudi Arabia) ..	276
Contracts attested for other concerns	148
TOTAL ..	424

LABOUR LEGISLATION

466

The following are the more important ordinances in force :

Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance (*No.* 20 *of* 1938). This prohibits the employment of children under 15 years of age, and the employment of women or young persons between 15 and 18 years of age on night work or in specified occupations.

Factories Ordinance (*No.* 21 *of* 1938). This provides for the health and safety of persons working in factories, their hours, holidays and overtime pay, and provides for the appointment of factory inspectors.

Workmen's Compensation Ordinance (*No.* 40 *of* 1939). This provides for the free medical treatment of workmen and their compensation in the event of injury causing loss of employment or death.

Minimum Wage and Wages Regulation Ordinance (*No.* 17 *of* 1940). This provides for fixing the minimum wages to be paid in any occupation.

Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinance (*No.* 23 *of* 1942). This legalises trade unions and makes provision for their registration and the audit of their accounts. The English law as regards " intimidation " is followed.

Contracts of Employment (*Indigenous Workers*) *Ordinance* (*No.* 45 *of* 1942). This provides for the employment of natives of Asia or Africa and requires contracts of employment for periods over six months to be in writing and approved by an authorised officer. It provides for the repatriation of employees working in other territories.

Labour Ordinance (*No.* 6 *of* 1943). This regulates contracts of employment, requires contracts in writing to be approved by the District Commissioner, and makes provision for deeds of apprenticeship.

7: Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1949-50) 1951 MM1 Aden MM1

Colony, and in particular to prohibit entry without a permit. Previously there was virtually no power to control immigration into the Colony. 167 671

The Official Secrets Ordinance, which replaces the Indian Official Secrets Act of 1923, and is based on the provisions of the United Kingdom Official Secrets Acts of 1911 and 1920.

The Registration of Clubs Ordinance, which provides for the compulsory registration of "clubs," as widely defined in the Ordinance. It empowers the Registrar, subject to confirmation by the Governor in Council, to refuse registration in any particular instance, and enables the Governor in Council to cancel the registration of a club. 575 671

The Civil Courts (Amendment) Ordinance, which provides for the setting-up of a District Court with power to hear proceedings of a civil nature (with certain exceptions) of a value below Rs. 2,000. For staff reasons, the Court has not yet been formed. 698 671

1950

In 1950 23 Ordinances were enacted of which the following were the more important : 671

The Police (Amendment) Ordinance, which enables the Commissioner of Police, with the approval of the Governor in Council, to appoint special police officers. Previously such officers could only be appointed by a magistrate when a disturbance had actually arisen or was apprehended. This gave little time for organisation or training ; special police may now be organised at any time for use should an emergency arise. The Ordinance also prohibits the wearing of uniforms in connection with political organisations or objects, and further prohibits the formation of quasi-military organisations. 625

The Registration of Persons Ordinance, which provides for the registration of all persons lawfully resident in the Colony at the time registration comes into force, and the issue to them of identity cards. The Ordinance is intended to supplement the new immigration control, under which all persons entering the Colony will be required to have a permit or pass. Registration has not yet been brought into force. 671 641

The Consular Conventions Ordinance, which confers certain powers and privileges upon the Consular Officers of foreign states with which Consular Conventions have been concluded by His Majesty's Government. 671

The Pensions Ordinance, which repeals and replaces the Pensions Ordinance, Cap. 102, and the Pensions (Subordinate Officers) Ordinance, Cap. 103, and is therefore applicable to all pensionable officers of whatever grade. It also incorporates provisions to implement the revised conditions of service in so far as the latter relates to pensions or to gratuities.

The Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Ordinance, which increases the compensation payable in cases of permanent incapacity from 42 to 48 months' earnings. It also places an obligation on an employer to give notice to the Labour and Welfare Officer of any injury which a workman may suffer in the course of his employment. 671 466

8:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 MM1 Aden MM1

Average rates of pay in the Building Trade

Young persons under 18 . . .	*Shs.* 3.44
Unskilled Labourers	3.13
Masons	10.73
Carpenters	10.87

The hours worked by harbour and wharf labourers are irregular, depending on the movements of shipping in the Port. The usual hours, in workshops and in the larger concerns are 48 hours per week (six days), though in the building trade a 54-hour week is common. There is little night work except that necessary for the mooring and oil bunkering of ships and the handling of cargo. Coal bunkering is not done at night. Sunday is the accepted day of rest. Paid holidays are not customary in Aden.

COST OF LIVING

An attempt was made by the Department of Economic Control to compile a cost-of-living index but it was not published because it was doubtful whether it was sufficiently reliable. A new index was then produced jointly by the Chamber of Commerce and the Township Authority and the first index figure was published on 15th July, 1952 and the second on 1st October. The figure on 1st October, 1952 showed an average rise of 20.89 points above that ruling on 1st April, 1951, and an increase in cost-of-living allowances and an adjustment to daily wages were made.

A list of some price-controlled commodities at 31st December, 1952 is given in the table on page 11.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT

The Department is still small, but work-places are as regularly visited as possible with limited staff. Particular attention is paid to the creation of better industrial relations, and to the assistance of workmen in settling their compensation claims and wage disputes. Efforts are also made to prevent the employment of children, and inspection is carried out to control the employment of women and young persons. The Labour and Welfare Officer and the Principal of the Technical College are factory inspectors, and a qualified marine steam engineer is the boiler inspector. There are no employment exchange facilities.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The work-people of the Colony have no conception of labour organisation or of collective bargaining. The only registered trade union is the Aden Harbour Pilots' Association with a membership of 11 European pilots.

The Labour Advisory Board of nominated members, employers and non-employers, met nine times during 1951–52. It has not yet proved possible to nominate any workers' representatives to the Board, owing

8:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 MM1 Aden MM1

467 both to the absence of work-people's organisations and the lack of suitable individual representatives.

It is possible to report an improvement, especially during 1952, in industrial relations, in particular the attitude of the employers towards the Labour Department became more co-operative. Four Government departments have instituted standing committees representative of administration and employees. These committees are at various stages of development and have met with varying success. One large industrial concern has established a Works Committee and appointed a European labour officer. Trade dispute statistics are shown on page 12.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

1951

466 The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance (No. 20 of 1938) was amended to define clearly the application of the Ordinance to persons engaged in the coal bunkering of ships by hand.

The schedules of the Minimum Wages and Wage Regulation Ordinance (No. 17 of 1940) were amended in order to raise minimum wages.

1952

The Essential Services (Arbitration) Ordinance is a new enactment which provides that trade disputes in essential public services must be referred to an Arbitration Tribunal, whose decision shall be binding on both employers and workers.

Under the Trades Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinance (No. 23 of 1942), the Trade Unions (Registration) Rules were issued, setting out registration procedure under the Ordinance.

The Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Ordinance extends the application of the original Ordinance to locally engaged civilian staff of departments of H.M. Government in the United Kingdom, and raises the amount of benefit to be received for injury.

Under the Minimum Wages and Wage Regulation Ordinance (No. 17 of 1940), amended schedules were issued in Government Notice No. 144 raising the minimum wages.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE

The safety, health and welfare of workers in the Colony are protected by the provisions of Chapters 47, 53, 75 and 143 of the Laws of Aden. Standards of safety and welfare are still unfortunately low and much remains to be done in implementing existing legislation. Happily the number of industrial accidents is not high, probably in part due to the comparatively leisurely pace of production; industrial accident statistics are given on page 12. A number of the bigger employers retain the part-time services of a medical officer, the biggest local concern has a full-time medical practitioner. Organised welfare services for employees are as yet virtually unknown. A notable exception is the Aden Port Trust which has an excellent voluntary contributory medical scheme for the families of its employees: a full-time lady doctor is employed, and the scheme increases steadily in popularity.

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Workmen's compensation is now fairly generally understood by work people, and an increasing number of employers avail themselves of the facilities offered by the Labour Department in settling their claims.

There is no provision for unemployment assistance. There are no general schemes, either contributory or otherwise, for sick pay, unemployment relief, or old age pension for the ordinary worker. Apart from the provisions made by Government and the Aden Port Trust for their employees, only four industrial concerns are known to have contributory schemes and scarcely half of the employees who could benefit from these schemes have so far become contributors. A number of the larger and old established firms at their discretion give gratuities to long-service employees.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

There are no training, rehabilitation, apprenticeship or training-within-industry schemes. Towards the end of 1952, however, a committee of practical engineers and builders under the chairmanship of the Principal of the Technical College produced, as a result of considerable study, recommendations for apprenticeship and trade testing schemes.

PRICES OF CERTAIN CONTROLLED COMMODITIES AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1952

	Unit	*Price*
Sugar, white	lb.	60c.
Sugar, brown	lb.	55c.
Flour, Australian	lb.	52c.
Butter	lb. tin	*Sh.* 4/63—*Sh.* 5/00
Cheese, Kraft	12 oz.	*Sh.* 2/55
Petrol	gallon	*Sh.* 2/64
Soap, Key Pale	cube of 250 grammes	52c.
Scotch Whisky	quart	*Sh.* 19/50
Kerosene	4 gallons	*Sh.* 10/15—*Sh.* 12/50
Rice, long, boiled, Burma	lb.	84c.
Coffee husk	lb.	80c.—*Sh.* 1/20
Eggs	each	19c.
Dry Ginger, West African	lb.	*Sh.* 2/88
Tamarind	lb.	57c.—67c.
Dry Chillies	lb.	*Sh.* 2/25—*Sh.* 3/00
Cumin seeds, Indian	lb.	*Sh.* 2/63
Cassia	lb.	*Sh.* 1/22
Tea, Calcutta fanning	lb.	*Sh.* 3/00
Milk, fresh	1¼lb. bottle	75c.
Firewood	traditional bundle	5c.
Matches, Key Brand	box	5c.
Charcoal	lb.	14c.—21c.
Loongies, various makes	each	*Sh.* 3/75—*Sh.* 17/50
Makramas, Sh. Othman (headkerchieves)	each	*Sh.* 3/75
Cigarettes, various brands	50	*Sh.* 2/50—*Sh.* 3/00
Bread (sold by baker)	lb.	56c.
White shirting, various makes	yard	*Sh.* 2/44—*Sh.* 3/19
White, drill, various makes	yard	*Sh.* 3/00—*Sh.* 5/44
Khaki, drill, various makes	yard	*Sh.* 3/00—*Sh.* 4/87

8:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 MM1 Aden MM1

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, 1952

	Number	Amount of Compensation
Fatal Accident Cases :		
Claimed and settled in Court	5	Sh. 17,584
Pending	4	—
No claim by dependents	7	—
Permanent Partial Disability Cases :		
Settled in Court	17	20,453
Settled out of Court	27	14,879
Closed without award (no permanent injury and other reasons)	101	—
Pending	43	—

Classification by Trades

Accidents on wharfs, on lighters, etc.	85
„ in factories and workshops	63
„ on buildings under construction	56

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, 1952

Types of employment	Date	Period of Stoppage	Number of men	Man days lost
Factory	January	8 days	144	1,152
Dock Labour	February	2 „	500	1,000
Factory	March	2 „	50	100
Factory	May	1 day	50	50
Dock Labour	June	3 hours	250	90
Dock Labour	October	3 days	150	450
Building Construction	October	3 „	50	150
Building Construction	December	1 day	24	24
		TOTAL		3,016

Chapter 3 : Public Finance and Taxation

STATEMENT OF REVENUE FOR 1949–50 TO 1951–52

	1951–52 £	1950–51 £	1949–50 £
1. Direct Taxation	702,716	418,607	316,351
2. Customs and Excise	295,206	246,179	215,012
3. Stamps, Licences, etc.	43,871	47,275	41,374
4. Receipt for or in aid of specific Government Services	129,899	44,854	38,230
5. Contributions and Local Reimbursements	27,372	20,784	15,931